(c) Modernisation/renovation is a continuous process and is taken up wherever required depending upon availability of funds and relative priority of works. Improvement works have been taken up at following stations during the last three years.

1996-97—Kim, Maninagar, Rajkot, Dhola Jn. and Ahmedabad.

1997-98—Sayan, Gandhinagar, Godhra, Dahod, Rajkot and Jamnagar.

1998-99—Vadodara, Billimora, Valsad, Navsarai, Gothamgam, Kosad, Kudsad, Mehmadabad, Anand, Nadiad, Ahmedabad, Barejadi, Dahod and Hapa.

During 1999-2000 improvement works at the following stations have been taken up:—Navsari, Vapi, Billimora, Lakhabhawal, Lalpur Jam and Bavla.

In addition Surat, Ahmedabad, Vadodara, Rajkot and Bhavnagar stations has been selected for development at model stations.

C.A.G. report of performance of Railways

1093. SHRI P. PRABHAKAR REDDY: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that, in its annual report submitted to Government, the Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG) has highlighted the casual attitudes of the Railway administration to the problem of safety in the Railways;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the CAG has also stressed the need for allocation more funds and manpower and more effective utilisation of the existing grant; if so, the details thereof; and

(d) the steps contemplated by Government to boost up the overall performance of the Railways in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) to (c) The Comptroller and Auditor General of India presented his Report No. 9 of 1999 pertaining to Union Government (Railways) for the year ended March, 1998 to the Parliament on 29.10.1999. This report includes a chapter containing his observations on various

shortcomings in the matter of safety performance on the Indian Railways. In this chapter, he has observed, inter alia, that there has been under spending of funds allotted under Development Fund-IV (separate head to finance and book the expenditure on specific items of safety works) in each of the 5 years commencing from 1993-94 to 1997-98 even though the total expenditure under DF-IV constituted only 1.76% of the total plan expenditure during the same period.

(d) Enhancement of safety in train operations is an ongoing and continuous process. The steps taken to enhance safety in train operations on Indian Railways are given in the enclosed statement.

Statement

Breif steps taken to prevent accidents

1. The work of track circuiting has been accelerated on the trunk routes and other important main lines.
2. Modification of the signaling circuitry is being carried out to minimize chances of human errors in causing accidents.
3. Auxiliary warning system for giving advance warning about 'signal at danger' to the driver of the running train has been commissioned on Mumbai suburban section.
4. Railway Board has cleared a pilot project of AWS for Tughlaqabad-Mathura section of Central Railway on a trial basis.
5. Walkie-Talkie sets have been supplied to Drivers and Guards of all Passenger carrying trains. The same is presently being supplied to Drivers and Guards of goods trains also and the same is likely to be completed by 31st March 2000.
6. There has been progressive increase in use of Tie Tamping and ballast cleaning machines for track maintenance.
7. For monitoring track geometry and runing characteristics of the track, sophisticated track recording cars, oscillograph cars and portable accelerometer are being progressively used.
8. For detecting rail fractures and weld failures 96 more double rail Ultra Sonic Flaw Detectors are being procured.

9. Maintenance facilities for coaches and wagons have been modernized and upgraded at many depots.

10. To prevent cases of cold breakage of axles, ROH Depots have been equipped with ultrasonic testing equipment for detection of flaws in the axles.

11. Whistle boards/speed breakers and road signs have been provided at unmanned level crossings and visibility for drivers has been improved.

12. Audio-visual publicity campaigns to educate road users on how to make a safe crossing are conducted.

13. Steps have been taken to prevent inflammable and explosive materials from being carried in passenger trains.

14. Periodic Safety Audit of different divisions by inter-disciplinary teams from zonal headquarters has been introduced.

15. Training facilities for drivers, guards and staff connected with train operation have been modernized including use of simulators for training of drivers.

16. Refresher courses are regularly organized at specified intervals.

17. Performance of the staff connected with train operations is being constantly monitored and those found deficient are sent for crash training.

18. Periodical safety drives are conducted to inculcate safety consciousness among the staff.

Rail Link between India and Bagladesh

1094. SHRI P. PRABHAKAR REDDY: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is a proposal under consideration of Government to open a rail link between India and Bangladesh;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) whether resumption of this rail transhipment would provide India